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ABSTRACT

A survey of National Education Association (NEA) higher education members examined opinions about governance issues, factors that affect quality education, and attitudes about the "new unionism." Characteristics of respondents are summarized and illustrated by characteristics such as median faculty income, length of time in higher education, and years at current institution. Responding to questions on how well the NEA and its local associations represent their interests, members give the NEA strong positive ratings, just behind department chairs. Asked about faculty involvement in campus governance, respondents indicated that they are least involved in making campus budget decisions, most involved in decisions involving adding or deleting courses, more involved in governance at campuses with collective bargaining agreements, and desire greater involvement in budget allocations. In negotiations and bargaining, respondents prefer consensus bargaining to traditional bargaining. On quality of education issues, 57 percent report being evaluated by peers, and most (including most tenured professors) report their employment is dependent on formal job evaluations. Finally, on questions concerning technology use, virtually all faculty report computer access, although only a fourth have used distance learning this year. (DB)

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Update

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NEA Survey of Higher Education Members and Leaders

NEA conducted a phone survey of a random sample of its leaders and members in May 1998. The purpose of the study was to examine opinions towards governance issues, factors that effect quality education, and attitudes about the "new unionism." The study had a 94% response rate. The margin of error for the sample is +/- 4.0%.

Profile of NEA Higher Education Members

Because most NEA higher education members are faculty (84%) rather than support staff, the profile of faculty members looks like that of members overall. This means that most faculty members have worked at the same institution for their entire academic careers and joined the union within two years of being hired by their current institutions.

The typical higher education member of the NEA is a faculty member (84%) at a community college (52%) in a city (48%) with between 2,500 and 10,000 students (40%). Members are mostly full-time employees (78%). The average member is 49 years old, has worked in higher education for 17 years, worked at the current institution for 14 1/2 years, and has been a member of the NEA for 13 years. Members are overwhelmingly white (91%) and have at least a master's degree (75%). A majority are women (52%).

Faculty Want To Be More Involved In Areas

WHERE CURRENTLY LEAST INVOLVED

Governance Area	Leaders — Degree of Degree of Faculty Involvement*	How Much More Involved Faculty Want To Be**
Q17 Allocate Budget	14	1
Q21 Percent Part-time Faculty	13	2
Q18 Salary Decisions	12	3
Q13 Select President	11	5
Q12 Add Programs	10	6
Q14 Select Dean/Provost	9	7
Q19 Tenure Decisions	8	14
Q24 Set Faculty Workload	7	8
Q23 Approve Sabbaticals	6	13
Q20 Tenure Criteria	5	9
Q16 Hire New Faculty	4	11
Q22 New Technologies	3	4
Q15 Select Department Chair	2	12
Q11 Add/Delete Courses	1	10

* Lower rank indicates faculty are least involved (according to leaders)
** Higher rank indicates faculty want greater involvement

NEA's higher education faculty are mostly in units that have a collective bargaining unit (87%), and relatively few have joined units without such agreements (13%). Members are about evenly divided between belonging to units with an agency-fee arrangement (54%) and voluntary units (46%).

A majority of faculty teach at a community college (53%),

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although a quarter work at a university with a graduate program. Most work at schools in a city (49%), although a third do work at small-town institutions.

Most have full-time positions (75%), but the percentage of NEA faculty members with part-time positions has grown to 25%. In the 1986 survey of higher education faculty, the percentage of part-time faculty was only 6%. This fourfold increase could reflect a combination of NEA's recent efforts to recruit part-time faculty, an increase in the number of part-time faculty in higher education, and possibly differences in the data-collection methods between the two studies.

The majority of faculty are already tenured (69%, down slightly from 75% in 1986). The percentage of tenure-track faculty has decreased (11%, down from 18% in 1986), and the percentage of temporary faculty (non-tenure track faculty) has increased significantly to 20%(compared to only 7% in 1986). The percentage of full professors has grown to 32% (up slightly from 1986), as tenured and tenure-track faculty have been promoted over the last decade. However, since retiring faculty have been replaced with temporary faculty, the percentage of faculty with a rank of lecturer/instructor has grown to 43% (compared to only about a third in 1986). Two-thirds have multi-year contracts, while 10% are on quarter or semester contracts and another 25% are on one-year contracts, with no job security.

The average ESP member is 44 years old, has been working

Figure 1

Median Faculty Income From Their Academic Job Is About $45,000

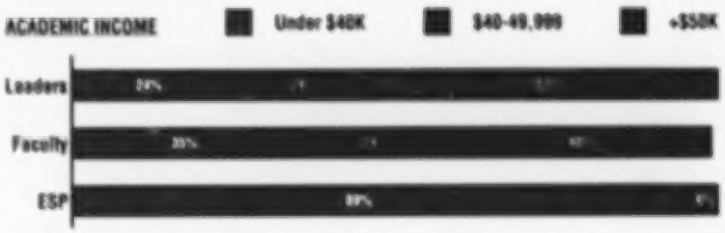
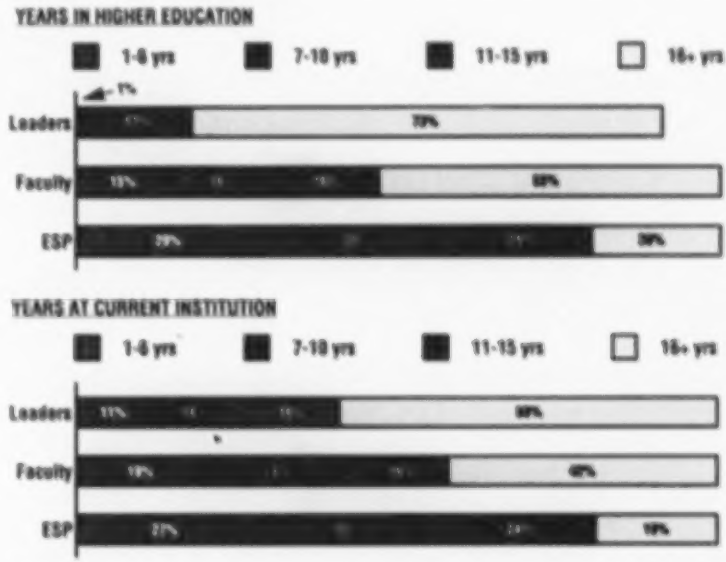


Figure 2

Most Members and Leaders Have Been at the Same Institution for Almost All of Their Careers



in higher education for 12 years (and at the current institution for 12 years), and has been a member of the NEA for 10 years. Two-thirds of support staff are women (compared to 50% of faculty). Support staff are also more likely to be minorities, with 85% identifying themselves as white (compared to 93% of faculty). ESP members have lower levels of education, with 86% having earned less than a master's degree. Support staff also have lower incomes from their academic positions, with almost all (89%) having incomes below $40,000.

Members feel that NEA and local associations represent their interests.

■ NEA and the local associations get strong positive ratings from both members and leaders (75% positive, 16% negative among member; 86% positive, 8% negative among

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leaders). NEA's ratings are almost as strong (68% positive, 23% negative among members; 75% positive, 23% negative among leaders).

■ Faculty give their department chair the highest ratings for representing their interests (followed closely by the local association). In contrast to faculty members, support staff give their local association better ratings for representing their interests than the other six possible representing groups.

■ Unexpectedly, agency-fee faculty members and voluntary faculty members give their local association almost identical ratings, and both types of members rank their local association as their second-best representative, following only their department chair.

Faculty Involvement In Campus Governance

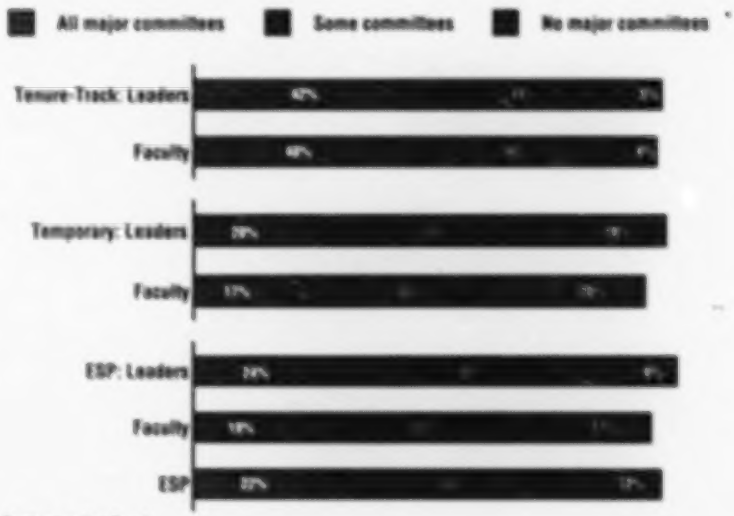
■ According to leaders, higher education faculty are least involved in making campus budget decisions, setting the percentage of part-time and non-tenure faculty, and making decisions regarding merit pay and pay equity. On over half of campuses across the country, these governance decisions are made "mostly by the administration."

■ Faculty are most involved in decisions involving adding or deleting courses, selecting department chairs, selecting new technologies, and hiring new faculty. Even in these areas, governance is rarely without significant administration input (if not complete control).

■ With only a few exceptions, faculty at institutions with a

Figure 3

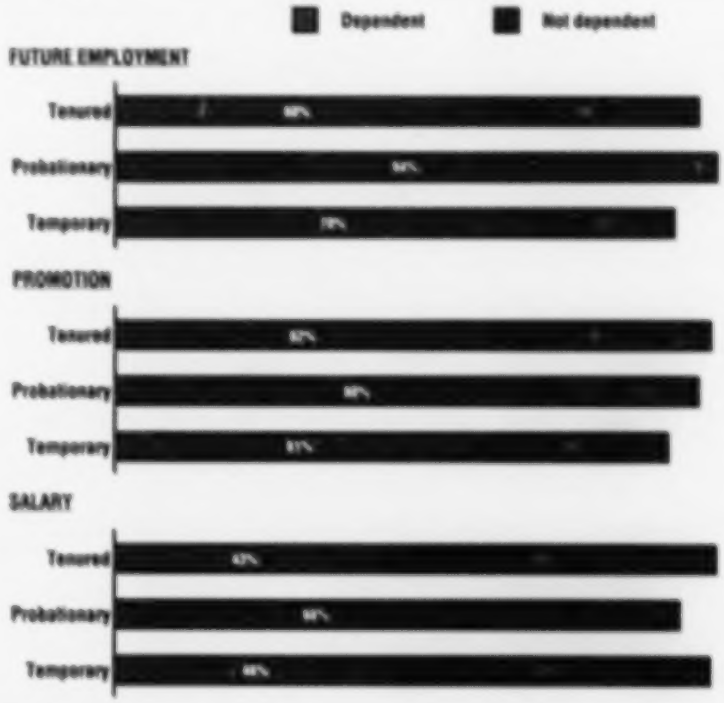
Reports By Leaders, Faculty and ESP On Extent To Which Tenure-track, Temporary and ESP Serve On Committees



Remainder "Not Sure"

Figure 4

What Is Dependent On Evaluation:
A Majority of Faculty, Including Tenured Faculty, Are Evaluated



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collective bargaining agreement are more involved in campus governance than are faculty at institutions that do not have a collective bargaining agreement. The two most notable exceptions are in setting the percent of part-time and non-tenure faculty and in making decisions related to merit pay.

■ Faculty most want greater involvement in allocating the budget among major categories such as salaries, buildings, and athletics and setting the percentage of part-time and non-tenure-track faculty. In both cases, two-thirds of faculty would like to see at least somewhat more faculty involvement (with 33% wanting faculty to be much more involved). Faculty also would like to see greater involvement in merit and equity pay decisions as well as in making decisions about the use of new technologies in the classroom-the only area in which faculty are already highly involved and want still greater involvement.

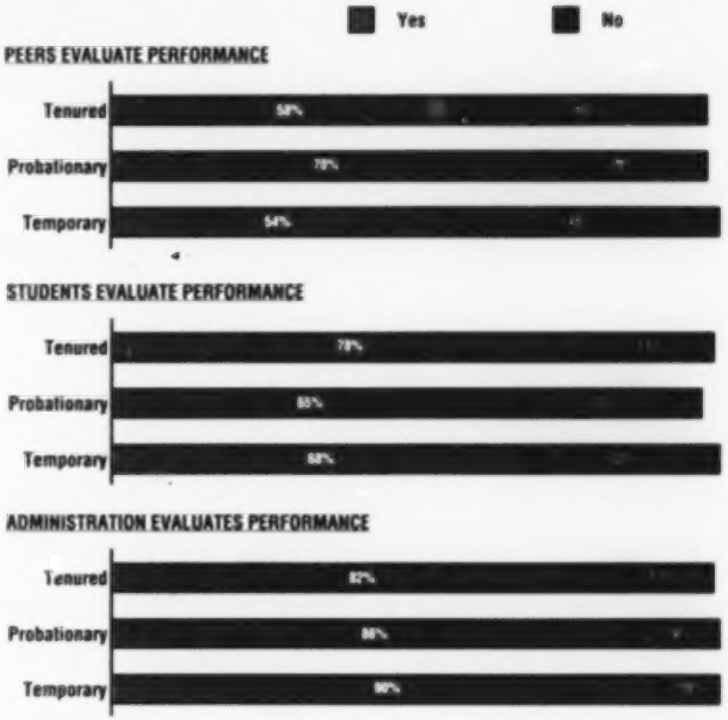
■ Faculty in units without collective bargaining also have somewhat different priorities from their counterparts with collective bargaining. The top priorities of faculty in non-collective bargaining units relate to the hiring of the campus administration and their own teaching (making decisions relating to the use of new technologies, such as distance learning, and setting faculty workload).

■ While support staff want greater involvement in all 11 areas we list, increased involvement in five governance areas are most important to them: making major decisions about new technologies; the addition or deletion of programs, departments, or major services; selecting a provost or dean; allocating the budget among major categories, such as salaries, building, athletics; and making salary decisions regarding merit pay and equity issues.

■ At half of all institutions across the country, at least one faculty member serves on the governing board of that institution. A faculty member is more likely to serve on the governing board at a four-year college than at a community college. Most faculty (over 80%) think that at least one faculty member should serve on the governing board.

Figure 5

Who Evaluates Job Performance:
Just Over Half Are Evaluated By Their Peers



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Negotiations and Bargaining

A majority of leaders and virtually all subgroups of members prefer consensus bargaining (57%) to traditional bargaining (31%), when asked which one of the two types of bargaining is more effective. This strong preference for consensus bargaining is compatible with "new unionism" and the desire of leaders and members to become more involved in governing their institutions. Despite a clear preference for consensus bargaining, slightly over half (51%) of leaders characterize their last contract negotiations as traditional, rather than consensus (38%).

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Quality Of Education Issues

Part of NEA's new unionism is an emphasis on improving the quality of education that NEA members can deliver to their students. It is difficult to address ways to improve the quality of higher education in a survey. However, two factors—the use of technology and how members are evaluated—can be used as indicators of the quality of education, not because their presence guarantees a quality of education, but because it would be difficult to deliver a quality education without them.

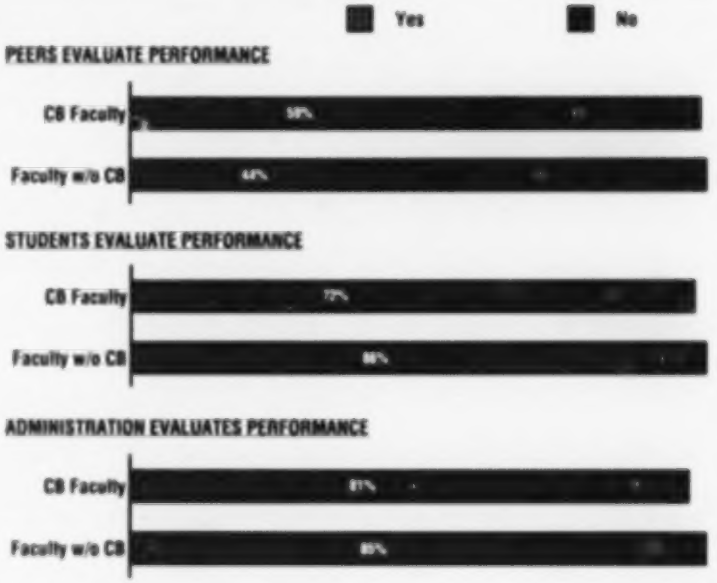
Evaluating members' job performance.

■ Tenured and temporary faculty are heavily evaluated. About two-thirds of faculty members tell us that their future employment and promotion is dependent upon a formal evaluation of their job performance.

■ NEA has favored peer review as an approach to evaluation that allows faculty to maintain control of their interests and to promote a high quality of education. However, at the current time, only slightly more than half (57%) of all faculty report being evaluated by peers. The importance of collective bargaining is clearly demonstrated when we note that faculty in collective bargaining states are significantly more likely to report that peers evaluate their performance (59%) than those in units without collective bargaining (44%). Those in non-collective bargaining states are more likely to report they are evaluated by students and the administration.

Figure 6

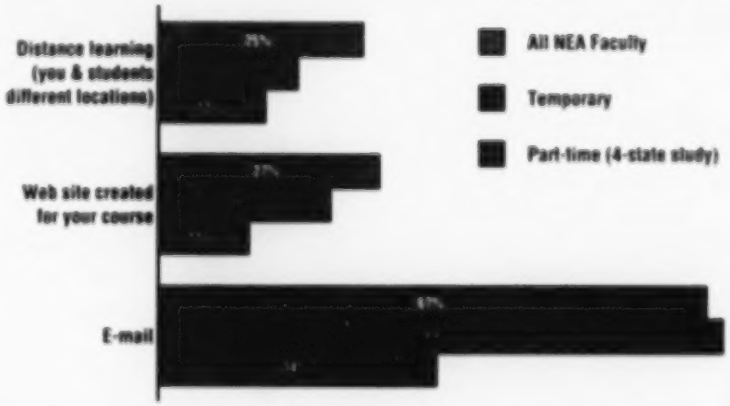
Who Evaluates Job Performance:
Faculty In CB Units Are Evaluated By Peers



Remainder 'Not Sure'

Figure 7

Uses of Technology In Teaching



■ Despite the public's view that tenure guarantees a job for life, 60% of tenured faculty and 55% of full professors believe that their future employment at their institution is dependent upon a formal evaluation of their job performance. As expected, virtually all tenure-track faculty hold positions that are contingent upon evaluation. In this study, 70% of the non-tenure track, temporary faculty hold positions that are dependent upon their job performance.

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Issues related to technology.

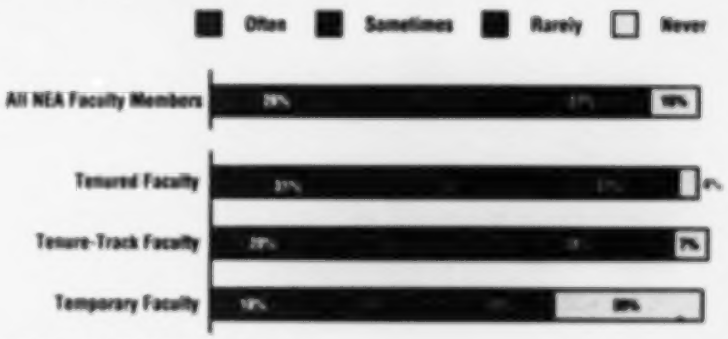
■ Virtually all faculty report that they have access to a personal computer, e-mail and the Internet on campus. In fact, 70% of faculty have a computer at their home as well as on campus. Access to computer technology is equally high among all subgroups of faculty.

■ Currently, only a fourth of faculty have used distance learning in their teaching this year. The fact that distance learning is still emerging as a new technology offers NEA and local associations the opportunity to establish guidelines that protect the interests of faculty and enhance the quality of education. A similar percentage (27%) of faculty have created a Web site for their courses during the last year.

■ E-mail is clearly the most accessible and frequently used of the new technologies we investigated, with two-thirds of faculty using e-mail to communicate with their students.

Figure 8

Use of E-mail To Contact Students
(Among those who use e-mail in teaching)



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